

What Is Iron?

Iron is a mineral. You get it from the foods you eat. Iron becomes part of your blood and carries oxygen in your body.

A pregnant woman needs extra iron to help her baby grow. Infants and children need extra iron because they are growing quickly.

What Happens if You Don't Get Enough Iron?

The amount of iron in your blood gets low. This is called iron deficiency anemia or just anemia.

Anemia can make you or your child:

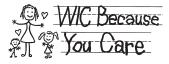
- Look pale, feel tired or act cranky.
- Eat poorly.
- Not grow well.
- Get sick and catch colds more easily.
- Have trouble learning.

How Can You Get Enough Iron?

- Eat high-iron foods like meats and WIC cereals every day.
- Add a little bit of meat to other foods like a hot dish or spaghetti with meat sauce. This helps your body use the iron in the other foods.
- Eat foods high in vitamin C like fruits and juices when you eat iron foods. Drink juice with your breakfast cereal.
- Remember to take any vitamin or iron pill your health-care provider prescribes.
- Limit milk to two 8-ounce cups a day for children. Milk is nutritious but has almost no iron.
- Try not to drink tea with your meals. It can keep your body from using iron.
- Crush high-iron flake cereal like Total and use it in meatloaf or burgers instead of crackers or as a crunchy topping for casseroles.

Iron Foods

- Meat liver, beef, chicken, turkey, pork
- WIC cereals
- Infant cereal
- Cooked dry beans and peas
- Spinach
- Prune juice and prunes
- Dried apricots and raisins
- Enriched breads and grains



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